

# BULLETIN

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REGULAR MEETING, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH, 1872.

THE President in the chair. Records of preceding meeting read.

### CONTINUATION OF MR. GREGORY'S REMARKS ON CALIFORNIA.

J. J. H. GREGORY of Marblehead continued his remarks on his journey to California. He commenced with his visit among the Mormons at Salt Lake City, and described them as a temperate, industrious, thriving and religious community. Their leader appeared to be a man of rare sense and judgment. He briefly commented on the nature of the country lying between the Mormon community and San Francisco, and gave a very interesting account of his visit to the latter city and of what he saw therein. The Sabbath, by a large portion of the business people, was observed as other days. No paper money is used. Gold and silver only are circulated, and nothing less than ten cents is known.

He referred to the Chinese as a neat and orderly class of people, and more susceptible to moral and religious

influences than many supposed. They are first met at Ogden, and at San Francisco occupy exclusively one or more streets. They have their own amusements, including theatre, etc. ; a visit in their midst, gives one, for a time, the impression that he is in China.

He noticed the mining towns many of which are nearly forsaken ; the mining regions, and showed how by the process of mining, the soil was forever rendered useless for tillage ; and the parks of big trees, of the latter many figures were given to show their size. Some of these trees are covered with bark thirty-two inches in thickness, while others, of enormous proportions otherwise, run up one hundred and twenty-four feet without losing more than a single foot in diameter. In his estimation most of the trees were not less than ten, eleven, or twelve hundred years old.

The beautiful and romantic scenery of the Yo-semite valley, which was also visited, he described in a very graphic and interesting manner.

#### FLORIDA INDIANS.

The following extract of a letter from Mary R. Kimball, of Salem, a teacher among the freedmen, dated Apalachicola, Fla., Dec. 25th, 1871, was read :—

APALACHICOLA, December 25, 1871.

I have been trying to get some information as to the Indian Mounds in this vicinity. One of the oldest of the "freed people" came in to see me, and said, "I am the oldest man in this place."

"Well" said I, "you are just the man I want to talk with. What do you know about those Indian mounds? Did they live there, or did they bury in those heaps?" "No" he said, "I have talked with some of the chiefs, and they told me that they were thrown up for defence; you will find them about every mile for a long distance. If you could find their graves, you would find buried with them a bowl of something to eat, with a spoon at their head, and a rifle at their side, as they were going to better hunting-grounds than we had here." "Why"

I asked, "are there so many conch shells around these places?" "They ate them as we do oysters; why, out in the woods there was a pile twenty feet high, but they have hauled many of them away to build up the roads. The different tribes and the Spanish would fight, and if you will go down to where the Flint and Chattahooche rivers fork and enter the woods, you will discover these mounds thrown up and will find skulls perforated by bullets; I have found them myself."

One of the colored men found an earthen jar last fall. He thought there was money in it, but finding none he left it in disgust. He said it would hold about two gallons.

I am going to get some one to direct me to these places when I can leave, and I will do all that I can to examine them.

The SECRETARY announced the following correspondence:—

From the Buffalo Historical Society, Jan. 22; a circular of the Chicago Academy of Sciences, an account of the loss of its building, collections, library, etc., in the great fire of Oct. 9, 1871; Maine Historical Society, Jan.; New England Historic-Genealogical Society, Jan. 22; New York Historical Society, Jan. 22; F. D. W. French, Boston, Feb. 3; Charles B. Moore, New York, Jan. 30; Feb. 1; S. A. Nelson, Georgetown, Jan. 16, 23; James Riker, Waverly, N. Y., Jan. 16.

The LIBRARIAN reported the following additions:—

*By Donation.*

BOLLES, E. C. Portland Directory for 1869. 1 vol. 8vo.

BROOKS, Mrs. H. M. Woman's Journal for 1871.

BUTLER, B. F., M. C. Conkling's Speech in U. S. Senate, Jan. 11, 1872. Report of the Department of Agriculture for Jan., 1872.

FREKE HENRY. The Dependence of Life on Decomposition, by H. Freke. 8vo pamph. Dublin, 1871.

GREEN, S. A., of Boston. Miscellaneous pamphlets, 4.

LANGWORTHY, I. P. Catalogues of Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary for 1838-9, 1850-1, 1856-7.

PERKINS, JONATHAN C. Catalogue of Amherst College, 1871-2. Exercises at the Semi-centennial of Amherst College, July 12, 1871.

RHODE ISLAND SOCIETY FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF DOMESTIC INDUSTRY. Transactions of 1855, 6, 7, 8, 9, 60, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 70. 16 pamphlets. 8vo.

ROBINSON, JOHN. Railway Times. 150 nos. Miscellaneous pamphlets, 50.

ROPES, WM. L., of Andover. Catalogue of Andover Theological Seminary, 1871-72.

ST. JOHN & COFFIN of New York. The Cabin Book; or National Characteristics by Chas. Sealsfield. 1 vol. 12mo.

SUMNER, CHAS., U. S. Sen. Land Office Report for 1869. 1 vol. 8vo. Washington, 1870.

*By Exchange.*

BIBLIOTHÈQUE UNIVERSELLE ET REVUE SUISSE. Archives des Sciences physiques et naturelles, Dec. 15, 1871. No. 168. 8vo. pamph. Genève. 1871.

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY. Report of the President and Treasurer of Harvard College, 1870-71.

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY. Seventh Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students, 1871-2. Boston, 1872.

NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC-GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY. Proceedings of, at the Annual Meeting, Jan. 3, 1872.

PUBLISHERS. American Chemist. American Journal of Science. American Literary Gazette. American Naturalist. Christian Register. Christian World. Essex County Mercury. Fireside Favorite. Gloucester Telegraph. Haverhill Gazette. Land and Water. Lawrence American. Little Giant. Lynn Reporter. Lynn Transcript. Nation. Nature. Peabody Press. Salem Observer. Shoe and Leather Journal.

Horatio C. Merriam of Salem, elected a resident member.



REGULAR MEETING, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1872.

President in the chair. Records of preceding meeting read.

PASSION PLAY AT OBER-AMMERGAU.

JUDGE JOHN P. PUTNAM of the Superior Court read a very interesting paper descriptive of the performance of the "Passion Play" at Oberammergau, which he witnessed in 1871. The audience listened with marked attention, and the Judge's description was exceedingly graphic and curious.

Oberammergau is a secluded village in the highlands of Bavaria, and presents, as it is gradually approached, a very picturesque appearance, nestled in a plain of green fields, with snow-capped mountains in the background, a cluster of quaint looking cottages, built of stone covered with plaster, having the low broad Swiss roof, and each with its little garden of vegetables and rose trees. In the centre is the church, an object of veneration, love and tender care, as the exquisite neatness of the interior, and

of the exterior with its surroundings, amply testify. The inhabitants, numbering some twelve hundred, are peasants and with few exceptions, carvers in wood, an occupation which tends to raise them above the ordinary farmer.

Many of their carvings are really art works and bear marks of careful study. An atmosphere of general peace and good will seems to pervade the place, the villagers pursue the even tenor of their ways, making their faith their life, and cultivating those traits of character so essential to the performance of this duty in fulfilment of a vow made during a terrible pestilence in 1633.

When the pestilence was at its height, the poor peasants vowed to God, that, if He would stay the plague, they would perform every ten years, in token of their deep gratitude, this sacred drama representing the character of Christ from His entrance into Jerusalem to His ascension ; this has religiously been continued with scarcely an omission every ten years to the present time.

The Judge then gave a brief outline of the history of the sacred drama ; a history which exhibits very clearly the gradual development of Christianity out of the forms and customs of Paganism, in the early period of the Church. Under the papacy of Gregory the Great the germs of the true mystery plays are found ; the Church then began to commemorate by processions with choruses, chants and dialogues, scenes of the passions and of the resurrection of the Saviour, and the various events of His life. He spoke of the popularity of these plays, in England, in the middle of the fourteenth century, and their continuance to a later period in Germany, Spain and Italy and to their final interdiction, generally, at the close of the last century.

The performance of these plays has been several times prohibited ; the villagers of Ober-ammergau have however

always succeeded in obtaining a dispensation in their favor. The time for its last performance was 1870, but the breaking out of the war between France and Prussia compelled its postponement to the next year. To illustrate its hold on the hearts of the people, Judge Putnam stated that the villager who personated Christ was drafted into the army, but he was permitted to wear his long hair, and so careful were the authorities and soldiers for his safety, that he was never placed in an exposed position, but was confined to garrison duty.

The account of the performance was minute and impressive. The stage occupies about twenty thousand square feet, with a fine opportunity for grand scenic effects. The performers number in all about six hundred; and although the services commenced at 8 A. M., and lasted eight or nine hours, there was nothing from beginning to end calculated to excite anything but feelings of profound emotion and reverence. Some of the spectacles were of exceeding beauty. The music was solemn and inspiring. It is not allowed to be written and no one is permitted to commit a note to pencil and paper. Two years previous to the performance the principal characters are selected, and the individual representing Christ must allow his hair to grow that length of time, also those who represent Joseph of Arimathea and many of the disciples. On the January preceding, the rehearsals commence and continue several times a week.

The theatre is capable of seating some five or six thousand people, and entirely uncovered excepting the first and second row of boxes. The play is given on every Sunday and festival day from May to September inclusive, upwards of twenty times in all, so that during the course of the summer one hundred thousand persons can see it. Everybody seems to be inspired with the occasion—the peasants

of the neighboring villages, the great and fashionable world, and the ordinary tourist, were all there, as well as the Catholic Priest, the Anglican minister, and the Protestant dissenting minister, thus showing sympathy and favor.

We shall not attempt a report of Judge Putnam's description ; it must be listened to in order to be properly appreciated. He described the opening chorus, the tableaux which precede and illustrate each act, the great taste and discipline which pervade the performance, and each of the eighteen or twenty acts in detail, beginning with the triumphal entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem at the rising of the curtain, and continuing through the High Priests in council ; the departure of Jesus from Bethany, and the taking leave of his mother ; the last supper ; the betrayal and the kiss ; Jesus before Caiaphas ; despair of Judas ; Christ before Pilate ; the scourging and crowning with thorns ; the sentence ; Christ bearing the cross ; the crucifixion ; and the resurrection and the ascension.

There was nothing, the lecturer said, in all this to offend the most delicate taste, or that was inconsistent with devotional emotions or religious instincts. Men and women go up to the performance, once in ten years, as if it were the Mecca of their spiritual pilgrimage ; and the entire representation, when once beheld, is a scene never to be forgotten.

At the close of the lecture several photographs of the scenes described were exhibited, which added much to the permanent impressiveness of his remarks, and terminated an evening of singular and profound interest and suggestiveness.

The SECRETARY announced the following correspondence :—

From C. C. Beaman, Cambridge, Feb. 7, 15; E. S. Joslin, Media, Penn., Feb. 9; Lucy Larcom, Boston, Feb. 17; S. A. Nelson, Georgetown, Feb. 6; William S.

Perry, Geneva, N. Y., Feb. 3; J. P. Putnam, Boston, Feb. 14, 4; W. Hudson Stephens, Lowville, N. Y., Feb. 10; Bruxelles, Academie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-arts, Jul. 15, 25, Aout 30; Buffalo Historical Society, Feb. 14; Dresden, Verein fur Erdkunde, Oct. 15; Genève Société de Physique et d'Histoire Naturelle, Oct. 1, Gorlitz, Die Naturforschende Gesellschaft, Nov. 18; Hague, Entomological Society of the Netherlands, Dec. 12; London, Linnaean Society, Aug. 2; Lugduno-Batavæ, Bibliotheca Universitatis, July 26; St. Petersburg, La Société Entomologique Russie, Oct. 21; Upsal, Société Royale des Sciences, Nov. 1; Washington, Smithsonian Institution, Jan. 20; Wien, Verein zur Verbreitung naturw. Kenntnisse.

The LIBRARIAN reported the following additions:—

*By Donation.*

BUTLER, BENJ. F., of Washington, D. C. Speech of Hon. G. F. Hoar of Mass. in U. S. House of Reps., Jan. 25, 1872. 8vo pamph. Remarks of Hon. Ellis H. Roberts of New York in U. S. House of Reps., Jan. 31, 1872. 8vo pamph. Speech of Hon. Geo. C. McKee of Mississippi in U. S. House of Reps., Feb., 1872. 8vo pamph.

GARRISON, W. P., of New York. Constitution and By-laws of New England Society of Orange, New Jersey, 1871. 16mo pamph.

HAVEN, HENRY P. Reports concerning the Public Schools of New London, 1871. 8vo pamph.

KIMBALL, JAMES. Massachusetts Register for 1869. 1 vol. 8vo.

LEE, JOHN C. Commercial Bulletin for Jan., Feb., 1872.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOOL MANUFACTURES. Bulletin. Vol. III. No. 1. Jan.-March, 1872. 8vo pamph.

SUMNER, CHAS., of Washington, D. C. Laws of the United States. 3d Session, 41st Congress, 1st Session, 42d Congress. 1870-71. 8vo pamph.

UNKNOWN. Worcester Directory for 1871. 1 vol. 8vo.

*By Exchange.*

ACADEMIE IMPÉRIALE DES SCIENCES, BELLES-LETTRES ET ARTS DE BORDEAUX. Actes, 3e Série, 32e Année. 1870, 1er et 2e Trimestres. 8vo pamph.

ACADEMIE ROYALE DES SCIENCES ARTS ET BELLES-LETTRES IN CAEN. Mémoires, 1868, 1869, 1870, 1871. 4 vols. 8vo.

ACADEMIE ROYALE DES SCIENCES, DES LETTRES ET DES BEAUX-ARTS DE BELGIQUE. Annuaire, 1871. 16mo pamph. Bulletins, 2me. Ser. T. 29, 30, 31. 1870-71. 3 pamphs. 8vo. Observations des Phénomènes Périodiques pendant l' Années, 1867, 8, 9. 2 pamphlets, 4to.

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, Proceedings of. Vol. xii, No. 87. July-Dec., 1871. 8vo pamph.

BOORE, A. P. Notice sur un nouveau genre de Ténèbrionides appartenant au Groupe des Adelides par A. P. De Boore. 8vo pamph. Miscellaneous pamphlets, 4. BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY. Bulletin for Jan., 1872.

DIE PHYSIKALISCHE-MEDICINISCHE SOCIETAT IN ERLANGEN. Sitzungsberichte. 3 Heft. Mai 1870 bis Aug. 1871. 8vo pamph.

PUBLISHERS. Gardener's Monthly. Gloucester Telegraph. Half Yearly Compendium of Medical Sciences. Hardwicke's Science Gossip. Haverhill Gazette. Lynn Reporter. Lynn Transcript. Medical and Surgical Reporter. Nation. Nature. Peabody Press. Quarritch's Catalogue. Sailors' Magazine and Seamen's Friend. Salem Observer. Shoe and Leather Journal.